[NEW SERIES.]
Vol. 2. *Price, 10 Cents. Per Annum, $3.* No. 4.

[Whole No. 291.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1874.

Subject: Foretokens of Resurrection.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

New York:
J. B. FORD AND COMPANY.
(27 PARK PLACE, AND 24 AND 26 MURRAY STREET.)
1874.

AMERICAN NEWS COMPANY, AGENTS FOR THE TRADE.
European Agents, Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Crown Buildings, 188 Fleet Street, London. Sold by all Carriers and News Dealers.

AUTHORIZATION.

Brooklyn, January, 1869.

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FORETOKENS OF RESURRECTION.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—Col. iii. 1-4.

Taken by itself, the Christian teaching on the subject of the resurrection of Christ has, from the earliest days, been laid open to many objections. Much philosophical opposition has been arrayed against it, and much exceedingly ingenious apology has been written for it. It is not fair to take any one of the elements—the capital elements—of the history of Jesus, and discuss it as if it stood alone. They are organic elements; they belong to a composite whole; and we cannot get the best and the truest light except we judge, not simply of the probable value of single individual features, but of the combined whole.

If one should see a brow upon a transparency or a canvas, it might be subject to criticism which if it were joined to the whole face would not be justified. We should think it unfair if a human face were dissected, and we were called to form a judgment in respect to the mouth, the nose, the pair of eyes or the brows. We should say under such circumstances, "Put them together; for that which they are is not simply what each is by itself, but what they are by their symmetry and proportions with each other."

Now, the history of our Saviour must be judged as a

(EASTER) SUNDAY MORNING, April 5, 1874. LESSON: Col. iii. 1-17. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 40, 364, 551.

whole, and not merely in its separate elements. No single great feature of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ followed the light of foregoing probabilities. At every step expectation was disappointed ; nor until ages, in many cases, were certain elements justified by results which had not been suspected. The conception of redeeming from their animal conditions an under race, raising them from physical life to spiritual—not by miraculous power, not by lifting them suddenly up through all stages and spheres, but by a gradual unfolding, by increment upon increment—this whole conception was hidden from the wisdom of antiquity ; and yet it was beyond all question the divine method, and the Scriptural method.

The nature of Jesus as God's representative, as from God, as very God in the flesh, cannot answer exactly to God in the spirit. Jesus Christ, therefore, is the manifestation of God not in entirety—not in the full amplitude of divine attributes. Only so much of God's nature was made manifest as was within the sphere of that intelligence to which the Saviour came. The circumscription of human faculty limited the degree to which there could be a manifestation of the full nature of God. How much you can tell to a child does not depend upon how much you know, nor upon what the force of the English language is, but upon what is the condition of the child's mind. You are stopped by those absolute limits which belong to the capacity of the child ; and all that is beyond the apprehension of the child's nature is surplusage, so far as the child is concerned. We speak, therefore, of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, not as if the absolute and infinite and universal God walked in Christ upon the earth, and so was represented by him, but as if so much of God as could be made manifest through the flesh was disclosed, the residue being hid in the divine nature, which is unapproachable and unintelligible to us in our conditions.

That Christ should have been born among the Jews would seem strange to every nation upon the earth except the Jews. That he should have been born of the family that he was born of surprises those who take only a superficial view of his mis-

sion. That he should have been born from a peasant workman's family, obscure, and under circumstances so out of the way that it would be difficult to conceive of anything lower—this seems marvelous to some. And yet the birth of Christ in a cave (for doubtless the stable in which he was born was a cave) in some way carries us back to the cave-life of mankind, when they were scarcely more than abject animals. He began at the bottom. He was born where the race first herded, of the obscure, among working men; and yet the ties of relationship coupled him with all that was most memorable and noble in Jewish association.

When we come to consider what was the real proposition—namely, the in-coming of Christ, and the joining of himself to the human race in such a way that every living creature should have in his life an objective token of God's sympathy and of God's purpose to save every individual soul that is salvable—when we come to consider what that was, then all discrepancies and improbabilities disappear, and the plan falls into place most admirably. It did not meet foregoing expectation, but it justifies after reflection.

Throughout his life, he being a wanderer, and having nowhere to lay his head, those miracles which have excited so much reprobation, so much suspicion, and so much skepticism, were in entire accordance with the marvel of the divine nature—with the great motive and purpose for which he came into life; and they held on their way consistently with each other to the very end of his life.

At last comes the final and the grandest, though the saddest, scene of the life of Christ—the dreadfulest fact in human earthly life—dying; but he who had come from heaven to lift up the race; he who had walked among those who were most needy; he who had joined the infinite power of God to men at the point of lowest human weakness, that he might lift the race out of the sphere in which they were born into the higher sphere—he, in dying, gave a moral significance to death which was totally revolutionary. And since Christ, through dying, brought life and immortality to light, death is itself vanquished, and is spoken of by the apostles as a conquered foe.

Now comes the resurrection from the dead, as the climax of such a history as this. The divine nature; the reasons of it; the harmonious execution of all those objects that brought God into human conditions; that detail of teaching and of miraculous interference; the death by which Death itself was to be divested of its terror, and made morally significant—all these require an appropriate ending, and they all have it in the fact that Christ rose again from the dead, and became the first fruits of those who shall die.

Now, looking at the coming, at the living, at the dying, and at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, in this continuous view, where was there ever a drama so sublime? Where was there ever one lifted up so far above any possible conception or invention of man? Where was there ever one which included in its scenes and contents such a vast sweep of things which were so unimaginable to antiquity, but which, as the race develops, become more and more admirable to men? And what is the origin of such a life, such a progress, and such a disclosure? What is its origin other than divine, which is so large in its scope, and so wonderful in its contents, that men, with the light of nature, and with successive disclosures in history, are not competent to take in the whole of it, nor even a full conception of it?

It is said that historical Christianity is waning. It is waning, if at all, only as the blossom wanes, that the apple or the orange may swell under it into life and beauty. It may be that there are many conceptions that have grown out of the physical conditions of Christianity, which are changing and are to change; but their spiritual import, the relations of the divine nature to the human, the route of the progress and destiny of the human race, the revelation of the great oversphere of spirituality, the powers that have been at work in times past and that are at work now to deliver men from the thrall of the flesh—these things are not waning. They are augmenting, and are growing in the intelligence and in the faith of men from generation to generation.

The broad question of resurrection, which will occupy our thought for the residue of the morning, I shall not discuss as a matter of fact—although as a mere matter of fact it is full

of the profoundest interest; nor shall I discuss it as a pledge of immortality, as the apostles did—notably Paul, who in the fifteenth of first Corinthians, and in other writings of his, argues it against Grecian scepticism, and makes it the opening of the door of hope to the whole human race.

Besides the constant witness of the resurrection of Christ which the apostles gave; besides their continual appeal to it as the ground and reason of hope of our own immortality, as it were repeating continually the words of the Master, "Because I live ye shall live also"—he being the first fruits, and we the after harvest—besides that, the apostles were accustomed to spiritualize this fact, as they were likewise accustomed to spiritualize the divine nature of Christ and his passion and death. They looked upon them both as historic facts; they looked upon them both, also, in their spiritual relations; and the death of Christ stood over against the decay, the weakness, the want, the perpetual dying, that is going on in mankind. The resurrection of Christ was spiritualized, also, by the apostles, and made to stand over against one of those steps or degrees of development by which the spiritual element in man gains ascendancy over the physical and carnal element.

Look at the passage which I read in your hearing:

"If ye then be risen with Christ [the resurrection evidently was meant; but they were not dead as to the body; they had never died a natural death; and if he was speaking of the physical resurrection alone there is no understanding the passage; but he is spiritualizing it, as it comes out in the sequence] seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead."

They were walking about, living in their houses, breaking bread from house to house, singing songs, saying prayers, exhorting each other, etc; and yet, he says to them, "You are dead," spiritualizing death, or assuming that men who are yet encompassed in the flesh and under its supreme control may be fitly called dead; and that every emission from, every going out of, that encompassing of the flesh about them, is in the nature of, or corresponds to, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That great personal uprising of Christ from the dead stood not alone as a fact in his history, and not alone

as a disclosure in respect to immortality: it had also continuity, and a relative application to that work which is going on in the hearts and dispositions of men under the divine influence.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Nobody is what he seems. The life which is outside and which we see is not the real life. The real life, as yet, is locked up—is hidden. You will not know what it is to be until you see it complete.

A person, going into a jeweler's shop to look at a necklace, is shown one opal, and another opal, in their separateness, a diamond here and a diamond there; but he sees not the whole. He sees not their real proportions, their gradations, their setting, every thing that belongs to them; and yet, he has some conception of how exceedingly rich the necklace will be from seeing the individual parts of it, although he knows nothing of the particulars as to how these parts will be put together.

So we, in this life, see manly strength, and courage, and purity, and truth, and patience, and love, and the other higher elements of the soul; these are scattered parts of our future life; but what we are to be we do not know. We are entombed, as it were; we are undisclosed; we are, using Christ Jesus as a figure, buried in him, as he was buried in the sepulcher; and as he waited to come forth, so we are waiting to come forth, and to be as he was in power, in beauty, in harmony, and in joyfulness. We are to be that compared with which all this mortal state is as the blackness of death.

Spiritualizing both ways, on the question of death and of the resurrection, it is perfectly fair, then, to say that the resurrection may be employed in the way of practical application, and in the way of comfort and of cheer, after the manner of the apostles. It is fair to say of it, if we spiritualize it, and apply it to all the separate elements of our life from day to day, and derive comfort and consolation

from it, taking it, as it were, in particles, in broken parts, that it is like the separate elements of a beautiful coronet. We are not doing violence to the spirit of Scripture, nor substituting our own ingenuity for the divine teaching, but are following the apostles' example, in spiritualizing it.

I remark, then, that every man is born buried in the flesh, imprisoned in matter, sensible to decay and death, and that all the steps by which he rises from his burial in the flesh are a participation, and are in some sense an intimation and prefiguring, of the great and complete resurrection. In other words, that change which takes place at death and after death in its entirety is also taking place little by little as we go on in this world. The full disclosure of resurrection—that is to say, the rising of the spirit, in all its amplitude and power, after the body is dropped—is the grand climacteric fact; but the preparation for it, which is a part of it, and which leads to it, is going on in all this mortal struggle.

In a few days now, when the hyacinth shoots its bold stalk of flowers into the air, and when the tulip, hardly waiting for the frost to let go, begins to expand its brilliant bud, do you suppose they will have organized all their work since the north wind forgot to blow? Do you suppose that these early blooming bulbs first think of that which they develop, the moment their inflorescence comes out? Do you suppose that inflorescence is the result of immediate action or cause?

Last August and September my hyacinths were beginning to develop the flowers which are about to show themselves. They were at work preparing for them then. All through those months there was being stored in the little invisible cells of the cormus, or bulb, that which was to support and take care of it during the cold season; and it lay through the dead winter waiting for liberty to come forth. And now, in the milder nights and warmer days of spring it is blossoming and bringing out that which has been getting ready to come out since last mid-summer.

Do you suppose that when, by-and-by, the crowned spirit spreads its wings and begins its wonderful flight from earth to heaven, from light to greater light, that flight will be a

miraculous, instantaneous creation? All the victories of that spirit will run back through its earthly years. All its attainments will have been gathering through its whole life. All the efforts by which the body has been kept under, so that the mind, inspired of God, might go forth and take hold upon resurrection and upon immortality—these have wrought out their fruits in the time that is past, and the great change discloses what has been effected. Every true man; every man who is unwilling to live as he is living; every man who is seeking to be better, to purify his soul, to exalt and ennoble himself—every such man, in everything that he is gaining of education, and of victory over that which is low, is preparing the elements of resurrection, and is beginning, as it were, to have a foretaste of it in himself.

Hence, every clear ascendancy of our nobler nature over the body brings us within the charmed circle of resurrection. Every man who finds himself unhappily situated; every man who is set afloat on the sea of life ill-equipped, with a thousand influences throbbing in him, and driving him on with basilar forces—every such man who, by the inspiration of the truth, and by the power of the Holy Ghost in his soul, makes fit resistance to whatever is evil in him—every such man, at every single step, in which he puts the yoke on the beastly neck, and bows down his passions into a proper servitude, and gives ascendancy in himself to that which is right and good and true and just—every such man is, by each victory which he gains, reaching forward toward the sphere of spiritual resurrection.

Now, I would not lower the standard of rectitude one whit; but I say that when God shall show us the truth balanced and proportioned, there will be a great many men that are hardly considered more than respectable here of whom he will say that they have done more, and fought a braver battle, than those who have gone out of life with all eyes streaming, and everybody looking up to them, as the servants of the prophet looked up to him when he went up in his chariot of fire.

There are men low down in the scale of spirituality and morality, who, if you weigh the power which is required to

enable them to resist their organization, and the circumstances in which those organizations are placed in this life—there are men who, if you consider how much patience they exercise, how much suffering they endure, how much persistent endeavor is necessary to keep them above absolute wickedness, and to develop in them even a little of the spirituality of Christ—there are men who, under such circumstances, you would say deserve more, a thousand fold (if you put it on the ground of deserving), than those who are organized more fortunately, and therefore have not the great battle of life to fight.

Now, I see men snubbed and put down because, being filled with brute forces and instincts, they do not reach a higher experience of the spiritual nature; I see men who are perpetually condemned for not having made greater moral progress; whereas, they may have made attainments which not one man in a thousand has reached who was more fortunately organized than they.

It is not to bring down the standard of human life, but to encourage men who are far down, that I speak thus. I say these things to them that, at every step which they take toward the spiritual life, in the direction of that which is higher and better, they may feel that it is a step which God observes; that he helps them in, and will reward them for, their work; and that though it may be far away from the light and glory of the resurrection, it is a foretoken thereof.

There are great, huge, rude men, representing the coarser physical elements of life; and yet, in them are the seeds of immortality, growing in the midst of thorns; and the thorns have been rent away; and the hands have been torn in the process. Those seeds are growing amidst poisonous weeds; and the weeds have been torn up by main strength; and the hands are poisoned and swollen. We witness it; and these plants of righteousness may seem to have but little growth.

Ah! bring a plant out from your green-house, where wealth has been able to buy skill, where it has blossomed unchilled by the winter in an artificial climate, where every insect has been kept off from it, and where all that was most favorable to the conditions of vegetable life has been secured

to it. It is most seemly in its bud, and most exquisite in its blossom. Now, go and set it down by the side of a starveling, in the wilderness; and I say that that poor plant, striving to blossom there, is more beautiful in the sight of God than this great and comely one. It has had no such nourishment and no such soil as the green-house plant has; it has had every enemy to contend against; and yet, in spite of these circumstances, it has come to itself in some slight degree.

Men who, in adverse circumstances, through moral resistance, and through aspiration, attain inferior results in the right direction are worthy of more praise than men who, in favoring circumstances, attain superior results in the same direction.

How easy is it for a general with ten thousand old veterans to subdue a mob of disorderly citizens! but does he ever mention a victory over such a mob in the annals of his military career? No. His victorious battle in the wilderness, where his means of transportation were cut off, where he was hedged in by a superior force, and where by dexterity, indomitable courage, suffering and death, he hewed his way out—that is the battle which he records, and which he loves to have praised.

It is what men do against adversity and up steep places; it is what men do against the lower nature under the inspiration of the higher nature—it is this that will be recorded in the other life. And if there be in my hearing to-day men who have an impulse all the time to live better lives, but who feel an influence drawing them down, who are conscious that the force of their organization is pulling them back, and who are in a sort of discouragement, because they think there is no use in trying, since they never can be such saints as some men whom they see around them—if there be such men in my hearing, I would preach the resurrection to them, and would say to them, Whosoever emerges in any part of his nature from animal conditions, and gains victories in the direction of moral superiority, has in those victories foretokens sent to him as prophets, saying "There waits for you a more glorious morning." Every step of emancipation from that which is base toward that which is noble is a forerunner which points to a yet more sublime emergence.

If you cannot be as good as you would be, fight for what you can reach, and never give over the battle, nor herd yourself with that which is animal, for the sake of living in worldly conditions of peace and prosperity. Believe that there is resurrection for you, and begin it here.

Every time men rise, not above single faults and faculties, but to a better plane of life, they do that which foretokens resurrection.

This foretokening of resurrection is the mission of trouble. If the sky be fair, and the air be dry, men sleep out of doors in California; and heaps of grain stand through the long months uncovered, and barns are never built, because there is no danger of the falling of moisture; but if the climate were to change, and there were to be rains through the summer, the inconvenience and damage occasioned thereby would modify men's arrangements, and they would no longer sleep out of doors, and barns would be built. In other words, they would begin to have foresight. That is, they would lengthen out their life by looking forward and organizing better conditions of husbandry.

Trouble is architectural. Thousands of men but for trouble would not have been half the men they are now. The things which make men cry when they are young make them laugh when they are old, if they only knew it.

It is not the men that get along the easiest that are the best off. Some men think that the consummation of a prosperous life would be to be on a golden canal boat, and go smoothly, without bumping, along the old dull canal, and never have to wake up, or do anything; with no oar, no steam, no noise, nothing to disturb them; only having to eat, and drink, and sleep, and be happy, all the day long. I would as lief be the boat as the man under such circumstances. That is not the way by which men emerge from lower conditions into higher ones.

You are all dead to begin with. You are all entombed in the body. You are all, more or less, in every faculty shut up; and every man is to be got out in one way or another; and the blows which disturb you are the blows which, on the rocks, are letting loose the crystals. The blows that disturb

you are the blows of the Deliverer on the lock or hinge, that are to set you free. If men knew what God's blows meant, they would say, "Lord, thou art knocking; thy knocks are hard; but I will open unto thee." Accept trouble when it comes, for with it comes the Lord Jesus Christ.

I go and sow my seed on the unprepared ground, and the birds pick it up; but let me rip up the ground, ploughing deep, so that the soil lies mellow; and then when I sow my seed the birds cannot eat it before the ground shall sprout it.

Sorrows and troubles prepare the way for the sowing of seeds from which come plants and flowers. God is serious. He has business. You are his children, and he loves you better than you love yourselves; and he is thinking unforgettingly of emancipating you from lower conditions, and bringing you up step by step to where you shall get a larger view of life. Every time a man has trouble which leads him to take new observations, and steer a better voyage; every time a man has an experience which makes him dissatisfied with the poor conditions of this life, and makes him long for the life to come; every time a man is conscious that he has been lifted up by an invisible force to a higher level of life, so that he discerns something more in himself than a creature of this world, and begins to feel that he is an heir to the divine and spiritual realm, then he realizes in part his resurrection. He has a fore-token of it. It shines on him. Therefore do not wait till the time that follows the great life —I was going to say death.

I can imagine how seeds feel in autumn. I can imagine how an acorn feels. I can imagine how it shivers through December, saying to the tree, "Have you measured me for my clothes? Do you know what a winter I have got to go through? I shall need to be thickly clad. Weave my fibers tighter and snugger. Oil me, so that the rain will not penetrate my coating. Make me so that I shall get through the cold season." The old oak sings and sighs, and says to the acorn, "I will do better for you than you think." So the acorn is thoroughly protected for the winter. And now it says, "I am perfect. This is what I was made for." But when the Spring comes a squirrel takes it and drops it in a

leafy covert, and cannot find it; or, the seed-planter takes it and puts it in the soil. Soon it begins to find its fibrous cover relaxing; and the acorn says, "I am losing my clothes; I am being ruined; I feel that I am sinking into the ground." And as the root runs down, it cries, "Ah, I do not know where I am going." But, as the plumule shoots up, by and by, and opens its leaves, and looks out, it says, "Where am I? What am I? Why, where is my acorn?" Eh! it is dead; and what have you in the place of it? Root below—branches above—the sunlight—and the whole horizon. Which is better?

Men are buried in the various elements of physical life; and when here and there come troubles and trials and influences which begin to crack them open, and they go through the labor-throes of a new life, and their roots reach down and develop themselves in the soil, and their germs, heeding the call of light and air above, rise higher and higher, how they mourn! How distressed they are! They are being taken out of seed-forms, and are coming into plant-forms, and they do not know that they are coming to resurrection.

Every victory in your personal experience, however humble, is a part of that spiritual resurrection from the dead which is going on all over the world among God's people. I mean by this, that every time you distinctly make some moral element more bright, more beautiful, and more constant in you than it was before, whether it be with or without consciousness, you are making some advance toward that resurrection.

Men's experiences are too often like illuminated houses when a great victory or a great peace is celebrated. On such occasions men buy candles two or three inches long, and put them in little bits of tin sockets, and stick them up at every pane of glass, and light them, so that they may be seen by everybody that goes past in the street. And was there ever anything more beautiful! That is just like folks under preaching and often in revivals of religion. They have little bits of enthusiasm, little bits of candles, that will not burn an hour. And after they have gone out how much tallow there is on the window, and on the carpet, and all about!

Now, if men, instead of having these petty illuminations, would establish in themselves a fountain of light, how much better it would be! I have candles that will burn all day, and all night, and never go out. There is a reservoir which supplies them; and the light that come from it—oh, how brilliant it is! The watcher blesses God for it. The mother, rising to look after her sick children, blesses God for it. It is a light that does not go out, and that needs no trimming and no replenishing. It stands in the house, and is always ready for use.

What men want is not virtues that shall rise and shine for a little while and then go out again, but virtues that shall remain; and every time you establish an element of truth in yourself; every time you give permanence to a principle of honor; every time you take the old thorn-bearing branch, and cut it off, and graft upon it a fruitful branch, and see that it "takes," that it is not "blown out," and that it becomes fruitful; every time you gain any element of truth, or faith, or meekness, or gentleness, or love, or patience; every time you give stability to anything good, in any direction, no matter if it be feeble, you have emerged; you have gone up; you are going out of the body, out of the flesh, out of burial, out of death; you are going toward life; and so you are having resurrection in dividend.

Every time men not only deliver themselves, but are made the instruments of God in delivering others, they have a participation in resurrection, and they also become a power of God, and ministering angels of resurrection.

The choir in this world which God listens to is not the great choir in the cathedral; it is not the exquisitely trained choir of the Sistine chapel; it is not the thundering choirs at the anniversaries of Meyerbeer, of Beethoven, of Handel, of Haydn, or any of those great musicians: the choirs which God listens to are mothers singing to their little children, and little children singing back to their mothers.

On this side of the gate of Heaven there is no place so near to heaven, or so much like heaven, as the household, if it be held under the power and dominion of wisdom and love. Mothers opening to their children the spiritual realm;

mothers teaching their children to fly and to sing bird-like; mothers scattered up and down through villages and towns, in the wilderness and in far off places, instructing their children in things divine—these are the choirs from which rise the sweetest notes that ever survive the influence of this world and the disturbances of time, and mount up through storm and fire, and are wafted to the heavenly land, where they mingle themselves with the voices of the redeemed in glory.

Do you feel that you are living lonely? Do you feel that you are unrecompensed in this life? Do you feel that nobody knows you or cares about you? O thou that from morning to night art full of weariness, full of aching, full of watching, and full of anxiety; O thou that sayest in the morning, "Would God it were evening," and at evening, "Would God it were morning," be not desolate nor cast down. Prisoner of hope, look up; for thou art giving birth again to that to which thou didst first give life, in that thou art opening the child's soul to immortal blessedness. Thou art an angel of God ministering resurrection to that soul. And there is joy waiting for thee. And here is where that great word shall be fulfilled, "The last shall be first and the first last."

Kings shall come and cast their crowns before God and rejoice, if they have been governors in righteousness; and generals and great men of the earth shall come to bring their honor and glory into the kingdom of God; and when all that were great and all that were strong have made their contributions, the Judge shall say, "Make way, and let my chiefest ones approach. And then shall come the poor who have divided their poverty that those who were poorer might live. Then shall come the weak who took upon themselves mighty burdens, that those who were weaker should have a chance of life and hope. Then shall come the joyous who laid aside their brightness that they might make happy those who were joyless. Then shall come the obscure and the unknown who have suffered for others, and by their sufferings have given birth to the souls of men. Then shall come many a poor village schoolmistress, pale and tremulous, who labored

hard and faithfully and long for penurious wages, and at last, with broken health, went home to die. Then shall come many a poor man who had no patrimony, nor patron, nor wealth, nor place, but who did not, by reason of that which he lacked, hold himself aloof from the world, but strove to rescue his fellow-men. And these benefactors shall stand high in glory. There are many poor slaves who shall outstrip the magistrates who remanded them to bondage again. There are many who toil in the lowest places of earth, and who are unheard of and outcast, whom God and heaven are waiting for.

To all who are discouraged in their family life; to all who are disheartened in their mission labors; to all who are working in darkness, and with a poor prospect of success; to all who are engaged in their pastorates far away, without honor or remuneration or earthly comfort—O that to them might be brought the sense of God's coming glory!

For all those who are patiently and lovingly ministering the truth of the resurrection to such as are around about them; for all those by whom souls are being delivered from bondage; for all those who are developing the higher and nobler traits of spiritual life, and are casting death little by little under their feet—for all such God waits; and the crowns are shining, the palms are waving, and the songs are written and ready to burst forth, which shall greet them in the other life. And many and many who died alone, the next minute after the last throb of life on earth, shall find themselves in the midst of innumerable saints in heaven. Here pauper, and there prince; here joyless, and there joyful; here dying, and there life forever and forever in the presence of Him who shall say, amidst wreathed smiles divine, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Work for yourselves, and work for others. Let your resurrection not be waited for. Take the earnest of it and the foretaste of it, that by and by the full blessedness of it may be yours.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our heavenly Father, as they who watch in the night draw near to the morning; for though they cannot reach the Source of light, though they know not what it is that brings forth the morning, they behold its brightness, they see how all things shine and rejoice in the light thereof, and they set their faces toward that light, to be themselves bathed with it, though they may not know its cause. How shall we ever make ourselves joyful if we wait until we understand thee? We set our faces toward the thought of divine love in infinite power, working out wisdom, and truth, and purity, and nobility. Thou sittest in the seat of everlasting power—for goodness is everlastingly powerful; and over all chaotic things, over all tumults, over all conflicts and oppositions, goodness shall yet prevail, and the kingdom of God shall be a kingdom of joy and singing. The whole universe shall resound without sadness or sorrow to the praise of God, and with the gladness of infinite hearts made worthy to be the children of God.

To this consummation our thoughts go forward. Though we are living far apart, in one chamber of thy universe, doing work the ends and issues of which we do not understand, we desire to be patient, believing that the great Husbandman knows that which we do not, and that thou art seeing throughout the growths of time, throughout all the prolongation of the seasons, as One who dwells in the whole universe; and thou art rejoicing and dost rejoice from day to day. For, though to those who are in the valley the storm shuts out the sky, yet those who are upon the mountain behold the sun above them, and in the light thereof see what is taking place in the valleys below on either side of them. And so thou, sitting upon the circle of the earth, dost see how men are beset with sorrows and troubles; and yet thou dost know that thy work is going on. Thou dost know that amidst infinite confusion there still runs the clear line of God's purpose. It is the divine tendency that every soul shall grow brighter and brighter; and the river of life is flowing stronger and deeper unto the end.

We rejoice, O God, that we may rise into the faith of that, and so into the faith of time, and into some comfort and courage of our own selves, that we may join those who seek purity, and elevation, and spirituality, and that we may have that confidence which outruns the senses, and takes hold of the great invisible treasury of truths.

We pray that we may be lifted up on this day of rejoicing all the world around. We pray that we may be joined in the universal acclaim and gladness, and that we may bring our hearts and praises to Him who hath brought life and immortality to light

O Lord Jesus! thou art on this side our brother, and on that side our God. Thou art to us the interpretation of that which we cannot find out by reasoning or research. Thou dost bring down to us such a sense of what is going on in the spirit-life, that through that we have approach unto God; and by thee we are able to stand before him. We rejoice in the tenderness, in the personal sympathy, and in

the love which couples thee with ourselves. We rejoice that it is a love which springs not from our excelencies but from thy compassion. Thou seest our toil, thou seest with what labor-throes we are being born; thou seest how we are straitened on every side, and are as children who have not cast off their childhood, and cannot cast it off, struggling for growth and for strength in growing; and thou hast been as a merciful high-priest touched with our infirmities, and tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, that thou mightest be our Deliverer; and when we are naked and open unto thee with whom we have to do, thou criest still: "Come boldly unto the throne of grace," that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need.

We ask, O Lord Jesus! for the mercy of God, not as they who are without it, but as they who recognize the supply, and still desire its continuance. We pray for the strength which we need day by day; for the renewal of hope in its very foundation; for patience; for entire submission to the divine will.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may never give over our faith in a God over-ruling all things for good, in mercy toward us in proportion to our need. We pray that this day we may draw near to thee with thanksgiving and rejoicing, and with renewed hopefulness, and that this may be a day full of divine blessings to every waiting soul.

Wilt thou especially draw near to every one that hath come hither seeking, in the sanctuary of God, strength and light that shall help him in his struggle of life. Draw near to every one according to his need. As thou didst address thyself on earth to all according to their several necessities, so again, and evermore, bring thyself to us as we need thee—to the poor in their poverty; to those who are feeble in weakness; to those who are disappointed and cast down, in their desolateness; to all who are uncertain, in their want of confirmation, in their perplexity, and in their over-turnings from day to day; to all that are suffering by reason of their faults and by reason of the faults of others round about them; to all whose hearts are sore with blighted affections; to all who are afflicted with bitter bereavements; to all from whom thou hast taken the light and the staff of strength; to all who remember the sorrows of days gone by.

Grant, we pray thee, that all may be able, this morning, to bear witness, that thou hast been present to them, and that thou hast given the strength and light of consolation to every one in due season.

We pray that thou wilt grant that all who have come up hither this morning, to bring their joy and their hope and their courage and their prospects of life before thee for thy blessing, may be able to offer themselves, in their gladness, to God, as an acceptable offering. May they never forget thanksgiving in the midst of sorrow. May they rather remember how much more reason there is for thanksgiving than for bitterness.

Grant that every day we may bring to thee, not our unceasing complaint, not our daily mourning: may we be the children of light, and bring something of love, and something of gladness, and something of courage, and something of aspiration, and something of hope, that we may please thee.

Grant that our faces may reflect thine, and be full of brightness.

Change even our night to day, or send stars to minister therein. We pray that thy blessing may fill us all with a sense of our own blessings, and with a sense of that better life and that better land which lie just beyond this world.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to-day upon all that gather together in the great congregations of these contiguous cities. May all who preach be able to do it with simplicity, with an inward understanding of thy truth, out of hearts that have been melted by that truth, and with power sent down by the Holy Ghost from on high. And we pray that thou wilt grant more and more that the truth may be efficacious in turning men from darkness to light, and from sin to holiness.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all those who devise morality; upon all those who work for the purification of morals; upon all those who seek to build up our times in justice, and temperance, and fidelity, and honesty.

Wilt thou bless this whole land? Remember the President of these United States, and all those who are joined with him in authority; and grant that thy blessing evermore may guide them into the things which shall be for the stability of our times, and for the welfare of this great people. Bless the Congress assembled, and all the legislatures of our several States, and the courts, and their officers, and all the citizens of this great land. May the poor and the needy be ministered unto. May the ignorant have light and knowledge brought unto them. May those who are drawn away from thee by prosperity be brought again to their Lord and their God. Spare this great people. Save them from judgments vindicating thy justice. Grant that they may walk in the ways of truth and righteousness into fidelity, and that they may become a people raised up of God to rain the light of liberty and true piety on all the nations of the earth. Make haste to fulfill thy promises, to bring in Jew and Gentile as one family, without divisions, without hatreds, without bickerings and contentions. May the whole earth at last rest in peace, in the salvation of its God.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word spoken, that it may be a word of instruction, of incitement, and of comfort. Be with those who need thee most; those who are under temptation; those who are grievously burdened; those who are discouraged by the greatness of the way. Be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land to those who are faint in the wilderness of their life. O Lord, we pray that thou wilt be bread to those who are starving, whether of heart hunger or hunger of body. Draw near to those who are blind so that they cannot see the way, and be eyes to them.

Be near to those who are sitting desolate as captives in a prison. Grant that they may have deliverance in thee. Be with all thy servants of every name. More and more fill them with thy spirit. Take away their sins and their temptations, and exalt them into the beauty of holiness.

Lead thy flock like a shepherd through the wilderness; and bring it at last, with exceeding joy and glory, into thine own presence in the world to come. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be the praise evermore. *Amen.*

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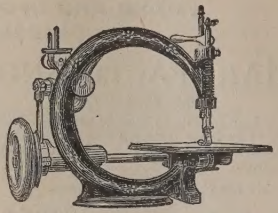

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